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<p><b>WORKING WITH VICTIM ADVOCATES TO ENHANCE VICTIM INVOLVEMENT</b> (15 minutes)</p> <p>We've talked about victim advocates, the importance of involving them in your victim-centered approach to managing sex offenders, and the various contributions that different types of victim advocates can make to our work and to victims in our communities. By now we've established that involving victim advocates increases our ability to effectively manage sex offenders. Advocates have legitimacy with sexual assault victims in ways that many of us do not, as we are often identified with the system that is associated with the offender. Advocates have different insights and knowledge as a result of their training and experience, and in many cases they will have already established trust with the victim. When we implement a victim-centered approach, it is in our best interest to enlist the advice and support of the system-based and/or community-based advocates that serve our communities.</p> <p>There are many different ways that advocates can be involved in the community supervision of sex offenders. It might be helpful to consider victim advocate involvement at two different levels: day-to-day case management and policy levels. You and/or your agency may decide to involve advocates on one or the other, or both levels.</p>	



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<p>(e.g., assisting them in sharing concerns with supervision officers and making recommendations about probation conditions, victim empathy education, and restitution);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help to identify when routine offender re-assessment might be called for and help to identify appropriate changes to case management plans;</li> <li>• Accompany supervision officers on field visits to offer an additional and unique victim-centered perspective on the risk issues associated with the particular offender, the impact of the offender’s actions on his family and acquaintances, and other observations that can provide insight into offender behavior, as well as provide support to family and other primary and secondary victims;</li> <li>• Discuss with the case management team how specific interventions that are utilized or proposed serve the best interest of the victim and the community as well as the offender (recognizing that what is in the best interest of victims and the community is also in the best interests of offenders);</li> <li>• Help treatment professionals to provide victim empathy programs;</li> <li>• Participate in case review meetings and share information (with victims’ consent) to promote informed case decisions that promote victim protection;</li> <li>• Assist victims in intra-familial sexual abuse cases in family reunification and, if reunification is to occur, monitor the process to ensure safety;</li> <li>• Explain victims’ core rights to them (see Section 3 of this curriculum for more information about core victims’ rights), and provide them with options and opportunities to exercise these rights in accordance with law;</li> <li>• Provide victims with guidelines about their right to submit a victim impact statement (VIS) – orally or in writing – to the court and/or paroling authority that provides them with the opportunity to discuss the physical, emotional, financial and spiritual impact of crime on them and their families; and provide assistance, if needed, in completing the VIS;</li> <li>• Provide victims with information about their right to seek restitution and other financial/legal obligations, such as child support; and help them document their financial losses for the purposes of restitution; and</li> <li>• Talk to victims about any concerns they may have relevant to their personal safety and security, and advocate for their protection through: seeking orders of protection, ensuring that sex offender management team members are aware of any safety concerns or relevant threats, and helping the victim to develop a comprehensive safety plan.</li> </ul>	<p><b>📖 Refer to Handout</b>  “Documenting Losses for Victim Restitution” for more information,</p>

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<p><i>In the Area of Policy Development</i></p> <p>In order to facilitate effective and consistent management of sex offenders, jurisdictions need both jurisdiction-wide and agency-specific policies. Victim advocates are well positioned by virtue of their work with victims, and with the criminal justice system on behalf of victims, to contribute to these policy development efforts. Advocates and other victim service providers can collaborate with supervision agencies, sex offender treatment providers, and others to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help review the existing policies and practices of the sex offender management system, and assist in exploring and implementing strategies that improve systemic responses to victims;</li> <li>• Help develop a Victim Advisory Council for the team, including victims/survivors and advocates, that can help develop policies, victim support programs, and victim awareness programming for sex offenders;</li> <li>• Offer a victim perspective on proposed policy additions or revisions to ensure that changes do not compromise the safety and interests of victims;</li> <li>• Promote legislation that protects victims and communities and holds offenders more accountable (e.g., when necessary, advocate for changes in state registry and notification laws);</li> <li>• Help craft policies that broaden coordination among agencies and the continuum of streamlined, coordinated services related to sexual assault; and</li> <li>• Facilitate involvement of victims and advocates in reentry policy and planning councils to ensure that the voices of victims are heard.</li> </ul> <p>Likewise, advocates can build collaborative relationships and ensure continuity between the work of their agencies and the criminal justice system by involving practitioners from the sex offender management field in assisting in the development of policies and practices related to victim services.</p>	<p><b>&gt;Use Slide #7</b> What Advocates Can Do With and For You: Policy Development</p>
<p><i>In the Area of Professional Training, Community Education, Information- Sharing, and Networking</i></p> <p>Sexual assault victim advocates have received specialized training in the area of sexual assault and are often eager to help share this training and information with others in the community. Many victim advocates and service providers consider community and system education to be a central part of their mission. Victim advocates, along with other victim service providers, can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide training and information about the nature and</li> </ul>	<p><b>&gt;Use Slide #8</b> What Advocates Can Do With and For You: Training, Community Education, Information-Sharing, and Networking</p>

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<p>prevalence of sexual assault, and the range of resources and cross-training available to respond to victims of sexual assault;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance the ability of supervision agencies and treatment providers to create effective victim-centered policies and identify victim concerns or potential problems in individual cases;</li> <li>• Participate in community notification efforts; and</li> <li>• Provide important input into the support or opposition of legislation related to sexual assault.</li> </ul> <p>It's important to remember in our training and educational efforts that information sharing is most effective when it works in flows both ways: 1) advocates and other victim service providers need a clear picture of how the criminal justice system handles convicted sex offenders in order to help identify areas where victims of these offenders and the public could benefit from their assistance, and 2) criminal justice professionals need a clear picture of the impact of sexual assault on victims and victims' families and how that may affect the ability of victims to participate in the criminal justice process, the safety concerns that arise from managing a sex offender in the same community as the victim, and the variety of resources available (or not) to victims to address these needs.</p> <p><i>Lessons from Around the Country</i></p> <p>A few jurisdictions (for example, New Haven, Connecticut) utilize a full-time victim advocate as part of a team that manages sex offenders in their community. Those of you interested in this approach can get a copy of the "Case Studies on CSOM's National Resource Sites, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Revised" publication from the Center for Sex Offender Management.<sup>1</sup> Other jurisdictions around the country have created similar positions or found other ways to draw upon the skills and experience of the victim advocacy community in their jurisdiction. In the example from Connecticut, advocates are supervised by and remain employees of the state community-based advocacy programs grant funded by community corrections. There are a couple of particular benefits to this approach: A community-based advocate can respond to victims' needs without being limited to the goals of the justice system. Also, as the advocate in the Intensive Sex Offender Supervision Unit of New Haven, Connecticut, indicates, victims respond better once they know that she does not work for specifically for the justice system and that her parent organization's goals are supporting victims in recovery and preventing future victimization.</p> <p>This is just one example of how other jurisdictions have successfully collaborated with victim advocates to improve services to victims and to more effectively supervise sex offenders in the community. In reaching out to victim advocates in your community, you will</p>	<p><i>NOTE: The role of advocates in community notification is an important point, worth emphasizing. Jurisdictions that have included victim advocates in their community notification efforts have reported very positive responses by community members.</i></p> <p><b>📖 Refer to Handout</b>  "Case Studies on CSOM's National Resource Sites, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Revised" is available on the CSOM Web site (<a href="http://www.csom.org">www.csom.org</a>) or ordered from CSOM using the document order form provided with the training materials.</p>

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want to explore with them all of the options available for successful collaboration as dictated by your local policies, resources, and needs. However you choose to collaborate with victim advocates, you will find your ability to effectively supervise sex offenders enhanced by that collaboration.

**TOPIC: VICTIM CONTACT AND INTERVIEWING VICTIMS**  
(90 MINUTES)

**VICTIM NEEDS**  
(15 minutes)

One of the reasons that advocates are effective in their outreach to victims is that they have been trained to understand what victims need when choosing to become involved in the criminal justice system. Just like physicians who are trained to ‘first, do no harm,’ one of the main goals when working with victims is to identify and address their most salient needs in an effort to provide the services they need most and to avoid retraumatizing them.

As we discussed earlier, sexual assault is an assault on someone’s control over their body and their life, on their ability to trust and believe that they can make good decisions, and on their self-respect. Anything that we do that further erodes their sense of control, their decision-making authority, or their sense of self-respect – even if we do it with the best of intentions – can be perceived as further victimization. For example, if we decide for a victim that she has been too traumatized to be involved in the management process, we take away her control and her right to make such a decision for herself. If we insist that she reveal details about the assault that she finds humiliating, we can erode her self-respect and make her feel exposed and violated all over again. To avoid this potential for further victimization, it is important to have an idea of what victims need in order to contribute to offender management, if they choose to do so.

It is also important to remember that, at the point at which offenders are involved with a supervision agency, victims have already been through a series of contacts with other parts of the criminal justice system. They may or may not have participated (by choice, ignorance, or pressure not to participate), in part or all of the criminal justice proceedings to date, including investigation, arraignment, pre-trial hearings, pre-trial investigation, plea-bargaining discussions, a trial, a sentencing hearing, and a parole hearing. They may have had good support from advocates, family and friends, or they may have felt isolated, confused, and traumatized by the whole process. It is critical that we understand that their experience may have nothing to do with us and our

**📖 Optional Handout**  
Sequence of Events in the Criminal Justice System

*NOTE: If you are dealing with an audience who is not familiar with the full workings of the criminal justice system, it might be important to supplement this section with the handout on the Sequence of Events in the Criminal Justice System. The*



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<p>agencies, and recognize that how we are received by both primary and secondary victims may have everything to do with these earlier experiences. Understanding this can help us respond more empathically to victims, helping to build trust between us. If victims feel that they have not been or are not being treated appropriately, they may retreat, disappear, or become justifiably angry.</p> <p><i>Victim Needs When Being Included in Supervision</i></p> <p>In order to effectively include victims in the process of managing sex offenders, we need to educate ourselves about what they need to participate in, as well as take from, the process.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Advocacy:</b> Many victims need some type of advocacy and support during the pre-sentencing and post-release phases of a sex offender’s criminal justice involvement to feel that someone is paying attention to their needs and concerns. As was mentioned earlier, even though the system is familiar to many of us, to most victims it is an unfamiliar and intimidating system, especially given the trauma they have experienced.</li> <li>2. <b>Safety:</b> Victims may be concerned that their involvement not jeopardize their emotional or physical safety or that of their family. They may want to know if what they tell you will get back to the offender, if you are making sure that the offender is not allowed to be near them or their children, or information about any number of other very real and serious safety issues. If the victim has experienced domestic violence at the hands of the offender, safety may be an especially prominent concern for them. It is important for many victims to have a safety plan, meaning that they have thought about or even written out what they would do in case they encounter a situation that makes them feel unsafe.</li> <li>3. <b>Control:</b> Many victims feel like everything has spun out of control for them. They may feel they have lost control of everything from their body to their family, to their neighborhood and sense of safety. We can give them back some control in several ways. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We need to make sure that they have control over their involvement in offender management, by allowing them to determine how much and what type of involvement they have.</li> <li>• We need to make sure they understand that they have choices.</li> <li>• We need to ensure that they have the information they need to make the right choices for themselves. If we do not have</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p><i>important point for participants to understand is the complexity of the system, and the variety of decisions that victims may or may not have had input into and the variety of people they may have had positive or negative contacts with.</i></p> <p><b>&gt;Use Slides #9 &amp; #10</b> What Victims Need</p>

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<p>the information, we can contribute to their feeling of safety by helping them to find out who does.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We need to give them control over their contact with the offender (though of course we cannot allow contact if the offender’s management team deems it unsafe, and we can and should deny contact in those situations, even if the victim requests it.)</li> </ul> <p>One of the most important choices victims have is whether to disclose information about themselves, the assault, or the offender. It is essential that we be completely honest about the degree of confidentiality we can guarantee and what will happen to information that they choose to give us. Giving victims control over their involvement does not mean giving away control over our jobs. It means offering them a job to do or a role to fill and control over whether and how they do it.</p> <p>4. <b>Information:</b> We are required by law to provide certain information to victims, and victim advocates can assist us in determining the best way to provide it. But whether required or not, most victims need information about their rights and who can help to exercise them, the offender’s status, notification procedures, probation or parole conditions, restitution obligations, court dates, and sentencing guidelines. Supervision officers are in a unique position to be able to provide some of the information victims need. We should be prepared to explain our role to the victim (and if appropriate, the roles of the other management team members) in holding the offender accountable. Some victims may also want information about the offender’s progress while incarcerated, or whether the offender has expressed any remorse or empathy; however, some victims may want little or no information. If available, this kind of information should be provided only when requested. It is important to be aware of exactly what information can and cannot be shared with victims, in accordance with state law and agency policies.</p> <p>5. <b>Input:</b> Many victims will want to have input into what happens to the offender throughout the various stages of the criminal justice process, including the pre-sentence phase, during incarceration, at the time of release, and throughout the community supervision period. There are different vehicles for victims to provide that input, and victims will need to know what kind of input they can provide that will be useful to a parole board or to supervising agencies. Victims may want assistance regarding how to give that input, information about what effect the input is likely to have, and who needs to hear it. Victim impact statements can be an important tool that helps some victims heal from the experience, but they also invariably help supervisors and treatment providers manage individual sex</p>	<p><b>Refer to Handout</b>  “Information for Victims of Crime – West Virginia Department of Corrections/Parole Supervision.” This handout is an example of how one state has interpreted their state laws and agency policies regarding what information can be shared with victims.</p> <p><b>Refer to Handout</b>  Resource Package on Victim Impact Statements</p>

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<p>offenders. Remember that victims often have information about the offender that no one else has and, as such, their input should be viewed as an <i>opportunity</i> for information gathering, and not just an <i>obligation</i> required by law.</p> <p>6. <b>Resources and Support:</b> Most victims need some additional support for themselves and their families. It may be emotional support, or support for other issues such as financial problems, homelessness, alcohol and drug abuse, domestic violence, and child custody issues. Victims may also be interested in our plans to ensure that restitution payments are made. Connecting victims and their families to resources they need can be a powerful demonstration of our understanding of their situation, and can help build alliances that will assist in the management of the offender and the safety of the victim and the community.</p> <p>7. <b>Access:</b> Victims need to be able to contact a supervision officer or other designated individual with questions and information. They should feel that the contact is welcome and not bothersome to the person they are trying to contact. If a victim contacts the probation or parole department for something that is beyond their scope, it is important to have a protocol in place for referrals. Officers should not feel responsible for counseling victims, or for taking all calls personally, but we can be supportive and appropriate by providing accurate referrals. Becoming familiar with the agencies and individuals who provide services to victims, victims who are older, have a disability, or have a mental illness is extremely important in this regard.</p> <p>Having a commitment to address the needs of victims to the greatest extent possible is simply treating important constituents with the respect and support that they deserve. To the extent that we apply our knowledge of sexual victimization to our interactions with victims, we are making it more likely that they will trust us and participate with us in our desire to provide effective sex offender management.</p>	

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**INTERVIEWING VICTIMS**

(10 minutes)

There are two stages at which supervising officers are most likely to be called upon to interview victims directly, or accompany a victim advocate who will conduct an interview: during the pre-sentence investigation and when an offender is placed under supervision (either post-incarceration or directly from adjudication). There are many other opportunities for interaction with victims, but probably on less formal terms. There are some jurisdictions, however, where officers are not allowed or are actively discouraged from making contacts with victims, especially post-incarceration.

? *Are there any protocols in place in your jurisdiction right now for contacting or interviewing victims?*

? *How many of you currently contact or interview victims on a routine basis?*

? *How many of you have designated staff to conduct interviews?*

? *How many of you are prohibited from contacting victims by the policies of your agency or another agency?*

? *How many of you work closely with advocates who make these contacts with you or for you?*

In this next exercise, we want to invite each of you to think more specifically about how you approach individual victims during an interview, and the various factors that may determine whether an interview is successful both from a sex offender management and the victim's perspective. Keep in mind what you've learned about what the victim might be experiencing, and what victims need to encourage and maximize their involvement with the process.

If you do not currently have contact with victims but are considering the advantages of increasing the level of victim involvement in your community, this exercise can help you think through the various issues that should be considered when creating a protocol or working with other staff to meet with victims and conduct these interviews.

**LEARNING ACTIVITY: APPROACHING VICTIMS**

(30 minutes)

I want everyone to think back to a time when they've felt wronged or

*NOTE: You may want to use this as an opportunity for audience interaction, as well as to find out some important information about your audience and the relevance of this discussion to their current work.*



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<p>violated. It could be because you or someone you love was a victim of a property or personal crime of some kind; it could be that you were the victim of a random act of vandalism, or road rage. <i>(Pause to allow participants to think.)</i></p> <p>If you have nothing in your own past that seems to qualify, think about the experience of a close friend or family member, an incident when they were mistreated or violated by someone, either a stranger or someone they knew. <i>(Pause.)</i> Jot down on a piece of paper some key words about the experience, either some important facts about the incident or some of the emotions that you remember feeling at the time.</p> <p>Now, imagine that a year has gone by since this event, and you get a call or a letter from someone in an official capacity saying that they want to talk to you about your experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the questions that come into your mind? What do you want to know from this person before you're willing to talk with him or her?</li> <li>• Let's say that you agree to meet with this person. What are some of the things that you expect from your meeting – how would you expect to be treated?</li> <li>• What are some things that this person could do to make you more comfortable?</li> <li>• How do you feel about having to talk about this experience with a stranger? Are you relieved? Irritated? Frightened? What kind of reassurance would you need? What if you had told this story many times already right after it happened? Would you feel any differently?</li> <li>• What do you notice about the responses that have come up? Do they suggest anything to you about your current or future work with victims?</li> </ul> <p>One of the important things to recognize about this exercise is that each person is going to have a very different experience when they are a victim of a crime, or are violated in some other way. Each of us was imagining a different experience of having been wronged or violated, and so we may expect that each of our responses may be different.</p> <p>The victims to whom we will be talking will share the common experience of having been sexually assaulted, or having their child sexually assaulted. However, while you can typically assume that the experience was traumatic, making other assumptions about the</p>	<p><i>NOTE: After each question, take responses from the participants and write them on a flip chart.</i></p>

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<p>experience could be dangerous and could interfere with the connection you are trying to establish with the victim. You do not know if they received appropriate support; about the quality of any support they received, and you do not necessarily know what kind of impact the experience has had on them. Everyone handles trauma differently, and a lot depends on what their individual strengths and challenges are, and what's happened in the time since they've been assaulted. The best way to approach an interview with a victim is with a solid understanding of the impact that sexual assault can have, without making any assumptions about the particular experience of the victim.</p> <p><b>CONTENT OF VICTIM INTERVIEWS</b> (5 MINUTES)</p> <p>We now have some understanding of how it may feel to be in the position of a victim who is being approached by a supervision agency. Let's talk now about how to apply that knowledge to conducting victim interviews, and the information that needs to be provided to victims. Regardless of who conducts victim interviews, the protocol or interview format should indicate the specific type of information that victims should receive and the information that should be requested from the victim. Remember that this is one of many opportunities for victim advocates to be of assistance. They can help develop the protocols, initiate victim contact, accompany officers when they conduct interviews, and/or assist with the interviews. Each jurisdiction will have to decide how to work with and make best use of the advocacy resources available to them.</p> <p><i>Information Exchange</i></p> <p>Supervision officers have information that can help keep the victim safe and can potentially help the victim to recover in the aftermath of the assault. The victim has information that can help supervision officers, the court, and the offender's treatment provider to make appropriate sentencing, probation/parole, treatment, and restitution recommendations, and to develop effective individualized supervision and treatment plans, which is ultimately to the advantage of the victim, the offender, and the community.</p> <p>When exchanging information with a victim (e.g., at the pre-sentence and post-release phase) it is important to take care to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be clear about the purpose of the interview, how the information will be used, and who will have access to it.</li> <li>• Explain the role of a supervision officer, including what the victim can realistically expect. Tell the victim how we can help,</li> </ul>	<p><b>📖 Refer to Handout</b> Interviewing Victims of Sexual Assault as Part of Sex Offender Management<sup>2</sup></p> <p><i>NOTE: The material that follows consists of a number of lists - things to remember, ways to create a setting conducive to information sharing, etc. The necessary material is covered in handouts, so trainers may prefer to continue using an interactive question/answer format to solicit the information, or break up the lists with opportunities for comments, questions, and shared experiences.</i></p> <p><b>&gt;Use Slide #11</b> Contact and Interviews</p>

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<p>being realistic both about our ability to accomplish what the victim would like to see happen, and the time we have available to work with the victim.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask if the victim has received information about his or her rights, and if they have any questions regarding how to exercise their rights (for more information on victims’ rights, refer to section 3 of this curriculum.)</li> <li>• Ask if the victim is receiving the necessary support services. If this is a first contact, we should be prepared to provide information about local services (the rape crisis center, child advocacy center, and/or other service providers as appropriate) and to explain that support services are available regardless of how long it has been since the assault. If this is a follow-up contact, we should inquire if the victim has been in touch with rape crisis or other support services, or if she or he needs additional referrals.</li> <li>• Ask the victim about safety needs or concerns. We might want to recommend that the victim at least think about, if not write down, what they would do or what arrangements should be in place if the offender contacts them or comes to their home, or if they see each other in the community.</li> <li>• Answer whatever questions the victim may have, and be clear about our availability to discuss things further. Setting up clear guidelines in the beginning can alleviate the potential for frustration and misplaced expectations. Victims should receive information on how to contact a supervision officer with questions or information.</li> <li>• Make referrals to victim advocates or others who are in the position to provide adequate support to the victim and respond to their particular needs. It is important that we understand the limits on the services that we can provide to victims directly.</li> <li>• As we become more familiar with the advocacy options that are available, we may be inclined to refer victims to different advocates or services for different purposes. Be sure to explain the different functions served by each advocate so victims can make an informed decision about where to go for help and we do not make their lives more complicated by sending them in too many directions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>📖 Refer to Handout</b>  “Victim Safety Planning: Essential Elements of Safety Plans” for more information on safety planning.</p>

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<p><b>TYPES OF VICTIM CONTACTS AND INTERVIEWS</b> (25 minutes)</p> <p>The information we've just discussed is relevant for any contact we have with a sexual assault victim, regardless of their age or how long it has been since they've reported the assault. Of course, we may need to adjust the style of the interview or the design of any information materials we provide depending on the age and abilities of the victim. We should also take into account where the offender is in the criminal justice process, as that can affect both the information we want to give the victim and the information we need.</p> <p>During the next few minutes, we'll talk about some of the most critical opportunities for contacting and interviewing victims: pre-sentence investigations and the offender's release into the community. We'll also spend some time discussing what you may encounter when interviewing the parents of victims, including non-offending parents of incest survivors. Finally, we'll discuss some simple parameters for preparing to contact and interview victims.</p> <p><i>Pre-Sentence Investigations</i></p> <p><b>?</b> <i>How many of you conduct pre-sentence investigations or interviews?</i></p> <p>Keep in mind that other agencies within the system, such as the prosecutor's office, may have already conducted an interview with the victim that has the information we need. It is best not to put the victim through more interviews than necessary. (One of the purposes of child advocacy centers, for example, is to reduce the number of interviews to which child victims are subjected.) We may need to work with these other agencies to find out what kind of information they collect, whether they would be willing to share that information, and/or whether they would be willing to get a release from the victim to share the information.</p> <p>If we conduct a pre-sentence interview with a victim, it's important to remember to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain that we are interested in hearing about the victim's experiences, feelings, and thoughts during and since the assault. We need to explain the kinds of questions we will be asking and acknowledge that the victim may have already had to answer these questions in another setting, and the difficulty of talking about the assault. When talking to a child or adolescent victim, it's important to remember to leave plenty of silence for the victim to answer. If a parent or guardian is present, we need to be clear when we need to hear from them, and when we need to hear from the primary victim directly.</li> </ul>	<p><b>&gt;Use Slide #12</b> Pre-Sentence Investigations</p>




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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask the victim what s/he would like to see happen, being clear that you cannot guarantee what will occur. What form of restitution makes sense? Does the victim want the offender incarcerated? Does the victim have any financial concerns that may be able to be addressed through restitution? Does the victim want the offender to perform any type of community service?</li> <li>• Explain the victim’s right to be heard on the day of sentencing. If the victim wants to make a victim impact statement, make sure s/he knows s/he can do so and explain how this is done; and explain the difference between a PSI and VIS. Make sure the victim understands the local protocols, such as whether someone else can read the statement on his/her behalf, or if it can be submitted as part of the pre-sentence investigation file.</li> <li>• Make sure the victim knows that a community-based or justice system-based victim advocate can go with him/her to the sentencing if the victim chooses to attend. Explain how to arrange this, but understand that some victims will already have someone they are working with and may not want to have contact with more than one advocate for confidentiality reasons, and for personal and emotional safety.</li> <li>• Ask the victim if she/he wants a no contact order. Explain what this means, when it would go into effect, what remedies are available, and what to do if there is any contact from the offender.</li> </ul> <p><i>Information Specific to the Offender's Release to Community Supervision</i></p> <p>We all know that sex offenders can be released into the community directly to probation upon adjudication or on parole following incarceration. If the offender is being released from state prison, it’s important to find out if the department of correction and/or paroling authority has a victim advocate who may already be in contact with the victim and try to coordinate efforts with that person. Keep in mind that significant time may have passed since the victim was assaulted, and that the victim may have very strong reactions to the contact. This is an important issue to discuss with allies in the victim advocacy community, because these victims should be approached with extreme sensitivity.</p> <p>When meeting with a victim (and/or a minor victim’s guardian) to discuss an offender’s release to community supervision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the role of a supervision officer, and explain specifically what will be done to maintain victim and community safety. If you work as a team with treatment providers, victim advocates, polygraph examiners, or others, explain everyone’s role and how the team works together.</li> </ul>	<p><b>&gt;Use Slides #13 &amp; #14</b> Information Specific to the Offender’s Release to Community Supervision</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the limits of confidentiality and what information about the offender can and cannot be shared.</li> <li>• Provide the victim with information about his or her right to be notified about the status and case of the offender; and provide them with help in enrolling in any victim notification programs. Thirty-five states have automated victim notification programs that allow the victim to call into a toll-free centralized telephone number to receive updates about the status and location of the offender, and to be notified by telephone when an offender is being released from a secure setting.</li> <li>• Inform the victim of where the offender is proposing to live and invite the victim to share any concerns. Find out if the victim wants to be informed of changes (e.g., in housing plans, employment plans, supervision conditions) and explain how the victim will be kept informed of changes in where the offender will be living, working, or otherwise spending significant amounts of time.</li> <li>• If the offender has been incarcerated, tell the victim in general terms what the offender has been doing during that time. Has he been in treatment? Has he acknowledged responsibility his sexual offense behavior? Is he in denial about the offense? If so, help the victim understand what, if anything, this means for his/her safety.</li> <li>• Explain that even if the victim wishes to have contact with the offender, the officer may be obligated to order the offender not to have that contact. Requests for renewed contact are especially common with intra-familial cases. Be sure that victims who desire renewed contact understand that if the offender makes contact in violation of his conditions, even at the victim's request, the offender could be subject to consequences, including revocation. It is important that they recognize the offender's obligation to comply with court orders.</li> <li>• When the victim is a child and the non-offending parent is seeking reunification with the sex offender, be aware that most jurisdictions have court-appointed special advocates (CASAs) and guardians ad litem (GALs), both of whom are volunteers who advocate for the best interest of the child. Child victims of interfamilial sexual abuse or stranger child sexual assault have unique needs that must be identified and addressed. Many victim advocates, volunteer CASAs and GALs, and multidisciplinary teams exist that help child victims and their families to understand their rights as victims of crime, cope with the emotional, financial, physical, and spiritual impact of child sexual abuse, and navigate the criminal or juvenile justice process and allied systems, such as child protective services.</li> <li>• If a victim inquires about reunification with the offender, make sure the victim has the appropriate information, resources, and support to explore this option. Be honest with the victim about the requirements that must be met to successfully reunify and</li> </ul>	<p><i>Note: Additional information about child sexual abuse victims, their rights and needs, and the range of services to help them is available from the National Victim Assistance Academy Text chapter at:</i>  <a href="http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/assist/nvaa2002/toc.html">http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/assist/nvaa2002/toc.html</a>.</p>

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<p>what the role of the supervision officer (and the role of the offender's and victim's respective treatment providers) would be if that process should occur.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the probation or parole rules and regulations by which the offender must abide and what will happen if the offender violates these requirements. Explain what options are available to the supervision officer to enforce the offender's compliance. Make sure victims know what they can do if they witness an offender's violation and what kind of latitude supervision officers have in responding, or not responding, to such information if they disclose these violations.</li> <li>• Explain community notification procedures and plans as well as the implications of sex offender registration for the victim. Invite input from the victim about community notification procedures. If you are in a state where community notification is required and consistently applied, be sure the victim understands these procedures.</li> <li>• Give the victim realistic information about what s/he can expect after the offender's release. You don't want to scare victims, but you don't want to give them a false sense of security either.</li> </ul> <p><i>Information Specific to Interviewing Parents, Including Non-Offending Parents of Incest Survivors</i></p> <p>We spoke earlier at some length about the high rate of sexual abuse of children and adolescents, and about the experience of intra-familial abuse. In cases involving children and adolescents, you may very well be in contact not with the primary victim, but with the victim's parents. In cases of intra-familial abuse, this means the non-offending parents of incest victims whom we earlier described as bringing a uniquely challenging set of dynamics to this issue.</p> <p>Parents or guardians of sexual abuse victims may experience the sexual assault or abuse as secondary victims. Many of the same issues that come up for victims of sexual assault may be present in those who care for them, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anger (e.g., anger at the perpetrator, at various forms of unresponsiveness or over-responsiveness by the system, and perhaps even at the victim in intra-familial cases);</li> <li>• Guilt (e.g., for having trusted the perpetrator, for not seeing sooner what was taking place); and</li> <li>• Feelings of mistrust (e.g., doubting one's ability to care for one's child, not knowing who to trust).</li> </ul> <p>Non-offending parents may present a particularly complex set of issues, since they may still have strong ties with the offender. They may be in denial that the abuse occurred or may minimize the impact. They may want to put the offender and everything</p>	<p><i>Note: More information about community notification and registration is available on the CSOM Web site at <a href="http://www.csom.org/pubs/pubs.html">http://www.csom.org/pubs/pubs.html</a> and information about the National Sex Offender Registry can be found at <a href="http://www.nsopr.gov/">http://www.nsopr.gov/</a>.</i></p> <p><b>&gt;Use Slide #15</b> Interviewing Parents of Victims</p>



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<p>Recall the exercise where we considered what it would feel like to have someone approach us after the fact to talk about an experience in which we had been violated or victimized.</p> <p><b>?</b> <i>What are some ways you can help make that situation easier for the person you are meeting with? What is the message you want to communicate not only with your words but also with your behavior and body language?</i></p> <p><b>WHAT TO DO WITH INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM THE VICTIM</b> (5 minutes)</p> <p>Victims can be re-traumatized by their involvement with the criminal justice system if the information they share about their experience, and their response to it, is used against them or to discredit them. Victims who fear this kind of harm may limit their involvement with the system for that reason. For example, if a police officer, prosecutor, or supervision officer makes notes about an encounter in which the victim was very upset, and characterizes that as hysterical or depressed or suicidal, the information could be taken out of context to suggest that the victim is not fit to take care of her/his children, or is not a reliable witness, even if the note taker had no authority to make such a clinical judgment.</p> <p>We noted earlier that it is very important to be clear and open with victims about how the information they provide is going to be used. This should include providing information about record keeping policies and procedures, and the confidentiality policies that are in effect, and if they protect the victim. Working with victim advocates may provide some additional protections to victims since, as we discussed earlier, many states extend the confidentiality privilege to conversations between a victim and crime victim advocates, while probation and parole records may be public record or, at minimum, vulnerable to subpoena.</p> <p>Some victims will be willing to share information on the condition that the offender is not made aware of the source of the information. If the victim reports a violation (such as the offender initiating contact), the supervision officer must be creative in finding ways to independently verify the information so that the victim is not implicated. It is important to realize that if you cannot find a way to verify information you confidentially receive from a victim independently, using the information not only could jeopardize your ongoing relationship with the victim but more importantly, could jeopardize the victim's safety. Promises made to victims giving information on the condition of confidentiality must be honored not only to preserve the integrity of your relationship with the victim, but the integrity of the system.</p>	<p><b>&gt;Use Slide #17</b> What to do with Information Received from the Victim</p>

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<p>For all of these reasons, we have an obligation to the victim to be very clear about the information we can and cannot ignore, and if known, how we will respond under certain circumstances. For example, supervision officers may be required to respond to reports of threatened violence with swift and certain action (such as detaining the offender in jail), with or without independent verification. The victim needs to know this so that s/he can decide whether or not to disclose such information, knowing that it may be easily traced to his/her disclosure.</p> <p><b>TOPIC: CONCLUSION</b> (5 MINUTES)</p>  <p>In this section we have provided information about effective interviewing methods that will help you engage victims in the process of effectively supervising sex offenders in the community. Just as important, we have discussed how victim advocates can be important allies in this work, given their specialized knowledge and training about victimization and victims concerns. As we begin or further develop our collaboration with victim advocates, it's likely we will find that many advocates do not have a great deal of information regarding the sex offender management field, and to work together effectively we will need to engage in cross-training to understand what each discipline can and cannot offer. Just as we look to treatment providers to run treatment programs, and polygraph examiners to conduct polygraph exams, we should look to victim advocates as the professionals who can help us establish and implement policies and protocols that will best help us serve past victims and all potential victims in our community.</p>	<p><b>&gt;Use Slide #18</b> Conclusion</p>

<sup>1</sup> Center for Sex Offender Management. (2001). *Case Studies on CSOM's National Resource Sites, 2nd Edition, Revised*. Silver Spring, MD.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from: Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. (1997). *Police Response to Crimes of Sexual Assault Training Manual*. East Hartford, CT.; and Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. (1998). *Standardized Training Curriculum*. East Hartford, CT.